

## THE "MODERN MAJOR GENERAL" (VINTAGE 1980)

by

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*University Capitol Campus, and the United States Army War College.)*

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**W**hat will be the role of military force in future domestic and international environments? What will the US military profession likely be called upon to do? In what sort of world will the military be called upon to do it? What kind of military professional will be needed to employ military force? The last question is the one which will be examined here. But to get to the last question, the first three must be considered in at least general terms. For it makes little sense to discuss the qualifications that a vintage 1980 "modern major general" must possess, if what he is expected to do is not considered first.

Over a century ago, Sir William Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan produced the delightful light opera, "The Pirates of Penzance," a satire on

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the modes and mores of Victorian England. The title of this article is borrowed from a song of that opera in which Major General Stanley sings happily and confidently that:

I am the very model of a modern  
Major-General,  
I've information vegetable, animal  
and mineral,  
I know the kings of England, and I  
quote the fights historical,  
From Marathon to Waterloo, in order  
categorical;  
I'm very well acquainted too with  
matters mathematical,  
I understand equations, both the  
simple and quadratical,  
About binominal theorem I'm teeming  
with a lot o' news—  
With many cheerful facts about the  
square of the hypotenuse.

\* \* \*

In short, in matters vegetable, animal,  
and mineral,  
I am the very model of a modern  
Major-General.

He continues, extolling the vast breadth and depth of his knowledge, and then admits graciously to some minor shortcomings:

In fact, when I know what is meant  
by "mamelon" and "ravelin,"  
When I can tell at sight a mauser  
rifle from a javelin,  
When such affairs as sorties and  
surprises, I'm more wary at,  
And when I know precisely what is  
meant by "commissariat,"  
When I have learnt what progress has  
been made in modern gunnery,  
When I know more of tactics than a  
novice in a nunnery;  
In short, when I've a smattering of  
elemental strategy,  
You'll say a better Major-General  
has never *sat* a gee—

\* \* \*

For my military knowledge, though  
I'm plucky and adventury,  
Has only been brought down to the  
beginning of the century;  
But still in matters vegetable, animal,  
and mineral,  
I am the very model of a modern  
Major-General.



The tragedy was not that Stanley was a well informed man, but that he was well informed only on matters that were irrelevant to his profession. The contemporary "modern major general" who does, in fact, know "more of tactics than a novice in a nunnery," but who fails to understand the role of military force

in the affairs of state would make Stanley's shortcomings appear pale by comparison.

All of us can enjoy a laugh or two at the expense of the mythical Major General Stanley. Some serious reflection is in order, however, as we wonder how many Major General Stanleys may have been produced in our own armed forces, and what we would like our vintage 1980 model modern major general to be.

In this article, the expression "modern major general" is essentially generic. It does not equate to a specific military rank but to a level of military professionalism that could include the ranks of lieutenant colonel/commander through general/admiral.

As a professional military officer progresses through his career from commissioning to the end of his service—some thirty or so years later—the tasks change that he can logically be called upon to perform. In the early years of his service, he may have to perform tasks that emphasize technical proficiency in a fairly narrow military skill—the "how to do it." As the officer continues with his career and has attained higher rank, the tasks he may have to

perform emphasize professional competence on an infinitely broader scale. The mature professional's contribution to the nation is more in his understanding of the nature of military force and its utility and application in the overall domestic and international environments. The professional military officer, at both levels, is defined as the career officer who possesses the necessary education, training, experience, and intellect to carry out those tasks that he is likely to be called upon to perform.

At some imprecise time around mid-career (15-20 years of service), and probably slightly beyond, the tasks that the professional officer may be required to perform fall more into the second of the two levels identified above. It is within this higher level of professionalism that my modern major general is to be found.

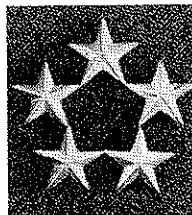
It should be apparent that not all senior officers could expect logically to be required to perform precisely the same tasks. It is not logical for an army brigadier general to expect to be assigned command of a carrier task force, or for a navy rear admiral to expect to be given command of an army separate brigade or division. It is not at all illogical, however, for either of them to expect an assignment on the Joint Staff or on the staff of the National Security Council, to cite only two examples. Our military professionals are not normally called upon to perform the more technical military tasks for which they are not trained, but they are expected to be educated well enough so that they can range beyond their narrow military proficiencies in other areas.

What our vintage 1980 modern major general should know will be examined from three points of view. What should he know about US civil-military relations? What should he know about US political-military relations? What should he know about the utility of military force in the evolving domestic and international environments?

### CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The term civil-military relations has both a broad and a narrow connotation; it is used here in the narrow sense to mean the

relationship between US domestic and military policies. This is the general area of interest of academicians who identify themselves with the sub-discipline of military sociology. The expression "the military in society" has appeared frequently in recent years in the titles of books and articles to describe the relationship of the military professional with the domestic social and political system of which he is a part.



It is important that our modern major general understands the constitutional and historical underpinnings of US civil-military relations. He must appreciate the historical general distrust of the American body politic for regular military forces, and realize that this apprehension is rooted very deeply in our colonial heritage. While our modern major general may at times be distressed by the realization that his profession is not held in particularly high national esteem, he may find some comfort in the realization that, except in times of clearly perceived national peril, it never has been much appreciated. He might also reflect that if it were otherwise, it might be at the peril of the very democracy he defends.

The Vietnam experience has caused some of our military professionals to yearn for the "good old days" of World War II when returning military men were greeted as heroes by a grateful nation—not as villains or unthinking stooges who implemented what was to become an exceedingly unpopular foreign policy. This yearning is very apparent among the Army War College students with whom I have been associated for the past four years. They are too young to have served in World War II, and many of them are too young to have fought in Korea. Their war is Vietnam, and somehow they long for the hero's welcome that was extended to another generation of military men. Many of them feel estranged from the society they serve; they consider themselves unfairly criticized for doing what their government asked them to do. I once heard this described in very stark terms. The American military, it was

argued, has been the nation's "nigger." Historically, it has done the dirty, unpleasant tasks nobody else would do and was then put down for doing them.

These officers who yearn for recognition are now the junior strata of today's second level of professionalism—they fall within my definition of the modern major general. Some few of them will, in fact, eventually attain the rank of major general, and all will move on to positions of great responsibility in many areas. It is unfortunate that they do not know more about the society they serve and that they feel so alienated from it. While the military man may occasionally wish that society would try to understand him, it is unrealistic and naive thinking. To believe otherwise is to misunderstand democratic societies in general and American history in particular.

It is essential that the military professional understand the make-up of the society he serves, as well as the political system that the society has produced. While I do not feel it is true that the armed forces of the United States are a mirror image of American society—and I don't really believe they should be—I fully accept the proposition that the armed forces of any nation are more or less a reflection of the parent society.

One of the surest ways to acquire a lack of understanding of the political process is to fail to participate in it. In the past, many military professionals did not exercise their right to vote. Twenty-five years ago this might have been attributed to the lack of absentee voting mechanisms in some states. Many officers, however, felt strongly that voting while on active duty was improper involvement in domestic politics, and they did not exercise their franchise even when the machinery existed to do so. I am convinced that a rapidly declining number of officers now hold to this view. A perceived lack of appreciation, however, by Army War College students of some very basic and fundamental democratic precepts caused the College to include a course entitled "Problems and Policy in American Democracy" among its 1975 elective offerings. It is a source of some satisfaction to the proponents of the course

that it is among the more highly subscribed offerings.

The military professional cannot serve his society if he is not aware of its strengths and its weaknesses, its fears and its aspirations. He needs intelligently to be aware of the major social and political issues in the nation. He needs to know something about the problems of poverty, urbanization, pollution, education, minorities, the role of women, youth, law and order, and inflation, to name but a few. Creighton Abrams, the late Chief of Staff of the United States Army, was an example of the modern major general during a tense July in 1962 as the Army Chief of Staff's representative in Mississippi, when federal troops were standing by during racial unrest, and in May 1963 in Alabama. He earned a reputation as a remarkably perceptive, politically astute figure; and, he won the acclaim of the highest officials in government and his military colleagues because, in addition to being a proven leader of men and an expert at the "management of violence," he proved in those exceedingly sensitive situations that he fully understood the society he served.<sup>1</sup>



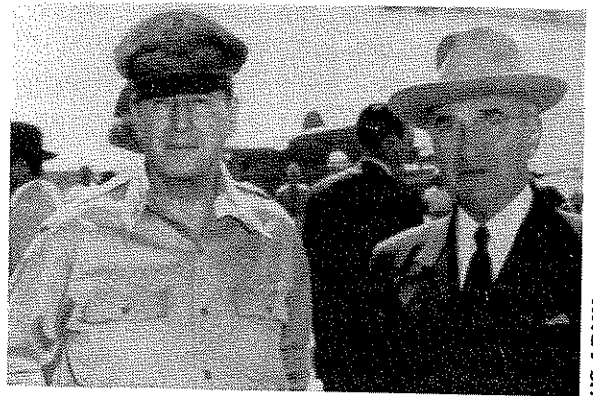
*General Creighton W. Abrams*

US ARMY

We do not need many military professionals who are primarily sociologists, but we do need military professionals who understand the society of which they are a part. We do not need many military professionals who are primarily political scientists, but we do need military professionals who are sensitive to the political system they defend. Above all, we do not need military professionals who are politicians, but we do need military professionals who fully understand the dangers inherent in politicizing the military profession of a democracy. It is concern for this latter point that caused consternation among some military professionals when it was announced that General Alexander Haig would be recalled to active duty to assume the duties of Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. This, of course, after he had made the decision, only a relatively short time before, to retire from military service to assume a sensitive political post.

Finally, the military professional must fully understand the concept of civil control of the military as it is practiced in the United States. While there is no doubt that, at times, the military professional finds the control exercised by some civilian leaders to be less than inspiring, I have never heard a senior military officer even so much as question the concept. Civil control of the military is an accepted element of the American system, and it is fully and unquestionably accepted by the military professional. The last great test of the concept was the Truman-MacArthur controversy. If there ever was any real question about who was "in charge," it was settled quickly, for the general was properly relieved by his civilian Commander-in-Chief.

Civil-military relations have little meaning in isolation; it is their relationship with political-military affairs that gives them substance. Stanley Hoffmann pointed out recently that domestic legitimacy is essential if the armed forces of a democracy are to have any value as an instrument of foreign policy. He said, "An army which is domestically illegitimate can have no efficiency in international relations; precisely because we are dealing with democracies, there is no substitute for domestic support."<sup>2</sup>



US ARMY

*President Truman and General MacArthur at Wake Island, October 1950.*

While the legitimacy of the American military profession in the eyes of the body politic was eroded seriously by the war in Vietnam, there are some indications that this is changing. A recent survey by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, found the military to be "the institution that best serves the nation." The US military rated highest among fifteen institutions, including colleges and universities, churches, news media, large corporations, the US Congress, labor unions, and the Federal Government.<sup>3</sup> This represents a shift in public attitudes from that shown by polls which placed the military profession near the bottom of almost every list not too long ago. Lest we become carried away with euphoria, if a popular military profession happens to arouse your euphoric tendencies, I would also point out the results of a reported smaller recent sampling by psychologists at the University of Connecticut. The survey was designed to rate the practitioners of twenty occupations as to their perceived truthfulness. Doctors ranked number one as the most truthful, and politicians ranked twenty as the least likely to be truthful. US Army Generals ranked fourteenth, immediately behind business executives and immediately before TV repairmen.<sup>4</sup>

It is generally accepted by students of the American military profession that the end of major US involvement in Vietnam has brought a change in overall public attitudes about the military establishment. Although still considered a necessary evil at best, the

military establishment seems to have regained a measure of its "legitimacy," while still maintaining its historic unpopularity. The Vietnam experience provided an excellent example of a legitimate military establishment losing its public support because of its association with what became an extremely unpopular foreign policy. One might argue from another viewpoint, and suggest that an unpopular or illegitimate military establishment participating in the execution of even a popular foreign policy may turn the nation against that policy. A democracy must have a legitimate military establishment carrying out a legitimate foreign policy, or both will suffer and likely fail. In Vietnam, it was probably the foreign policy that lost its legitimacy first and, by association, the military became illegitimate.

There are a number of very strong ties between a nation's foreign and domestic policies, and one of the most apparent is the acceptance of the military by society and its use as a legitimate instrument of foreign policy. Indeed, the key to successful civil-military relations is acceptance of the military by society. This is not necessarily love, affection, high esteem, endearment, adoration, infatuation, or any number of like expressions of fondness, but simple, practical acceptance as a legitimate instrument of national policy. The military professional, however, cannot hope to be understood and awarded legitimacy by society if he does not understand that society.

#### POLITICAL-MILITARY RELATIONS

**A**s with civil-military relations, the term political-military relations has both a broad and a narrow connotation. Again, in this discussion the expression will be used in its narrow sense. It means the relationship between US foreign and military policies.

Most of our 20th century modern major generals will claim acceptance of the Clausewitz dictum that war is but an extension of diplomacy by other means. A few of them may even entertain the proposition that the reverse is at least equally

true in the contemporary international environment, and that diplomacy is but an extension of war by other means. The first thought suggests that, in the final analysis, war deals with those issues that diplomacy failed to resolve. The second raises the proposition that diplomacy is the final arbiter and deals with those issues that war has failed to sort out. I would argue that the two thoughts are not mutually exclusive, but both are perfectly legitimate expressions of the relationship between diplomacy and military force. That relationship is more pronounced in today's environment, and political-military relationships are understood by a growing number of political and military leaders. The modern major general must fully understand that military force has no meaning as an end in itself, but takes on "legitimacy" only in the context of the political objective it is intended to achieve.

Some of my colleagues became perturbed recently when a few lecturers at the US Army War College suggested that we had "lost" the war in Vietnam. Of course, no one likes to be told that his efforts failed—especially when he had served two or three tours in Vietnam. One modern major general—a senior one in this case—stated categorically that this was ridiculous. He argued that we had won the war militarily but lost it politically, and somehow this hocus-pocus seemed to satisfy him. The fact that the nation had not achieved completely the political objective it apparently sought, even though we had won the military battles, did not disturb him. He could not comprehend the idea that the only justification for the use of military force as an instrument of foreign policy is the achievement of some political objective. Although he is a senior military officer, he does not fit my concept of a modern professional.

The military professional has a valid question when he asks what foreign policy objectives he may be called upon to pursue, and in what international environment he may be required to use military force. Especially since the onset of the cold war, the American military profession and the civil leadership came to think in terms of the

"threat." This was not only convenient but also it was eminently practical. In the bi-polar configuration that evolved after 1947, the threat was generally agreed upon and the unquestioned task of the American military profession was to defend against it. Commencing in the late 1940's and extending into the mid to late 1960's, there was a widely accepted political-military policy explained best by the word "containment." It can be argued with some persuasion that our involvement in Vietnam by the Kennedy-Johnson administration in the 1960's was the last great surge of the containment policy. For practical purposes, a military establishment was domestically legitimate whose task was to implement that policy.

In a very real sense, it was a simple world model from the political-military point of view. The threat was clear, and not only the need for military force but also the nature of that force was clear and broadly accepted. The American military establishment had legitimacy to spare. The world changed, however, and observers began to talk in terms of a multi-polar world with up to five major centers of power. Pentagonal models appeared and models of overlapping and intertwining triangles followed. The debate continues, and clearly will for some time, as to exactly what kind of international system we are likely to have. To the extent that anything resembling a consensus might exist, it might be found in the proposition that the world is no longer bi-polar as it was considered for the past quarter century, and that the five-sided configuration has not become a reality. It would seem, then, that we are somewhere in limbo between the comfortable (because we thought we understood it) bi-polar world and the uncomfortable (because we don't understand it) multi-polar world. The never-never land between the two is the terrain upon which some kind of a political-military consensus must be constructed. The military professional finds this ground uncertain and unsteady; the civilian policymaker finds it equally troublesome, while the public finds it even more difficult to comprehend.

In a study done at the Army War College a few years ago, there was an attempt to look at the evolving domestic and international environments with the hope of providing some insights into what the world may be like through the decade of the seventies. From that perspective there was an effort to determine what the role of military force might be in that environment and, more precisely, to attempt to identify things that the Army might be required to do. The study team soon found itself faced with the logical question of the threat, but the generally-accepted cold war explanations were unconvincing. It was clear that there was still a strong bi-polar flavor to the international system, but it was equally clear that there were strong multi-polar developments and that these developments would probably grow in strength. There was a strong identifiable threat at the bi-polar end of a spectrum, but it was perceived as being relatively limited to the strategic nuclear level. The unpredictability of this evolving international system was identified as the most difficult threat with which to deal, and the one with which the civilian and military planner as well as the public would have the most difficulty.<sup>5</sup>

It is indeed difficult to defend a large military budget before the Congress to maintain forces whose task is to cope with some unidentifiable threat centered on the unpredictability of an international system that cannot even be described in reasonably precise terms. A strategic nuclear force to deter the Soviet Union is understandable and accepted as legitimate. Beyond that, the nation asks: How much and what kind of force do we need to defend against this amorphous threat—whatever it may be? What kind of foreign policy makes sense in this evolving world, and what sort of military force and military policy do we need to serve as an instrument of that policy? Perhaps most important of all, how does one legitimize a military force in such an environment?

In a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, William P. Bundy surveys the problem of national security today and points out the tremendous complexities of the evolving international system, making the point that

the problems facing defense planners are indeed complex. He comments, concerning the military planner, that: "It is a hard time for military planners; the range of contingencies is great..." That is but another way of raising the question: military force to defend against what? It is interesting to note that his article is entitled "International (not National) Security Today."<sup>6</sup>

The 20th century modern major general must understand the world in which he lives—to the extent anyone can understand it. He must realize that this is not the same world in which he served as a junior officer a decade or so ago. He must also realize that the threat is no longer so clear and precise, that the perceptions of the American people have changed considerably in recent years, and that the legitimacy of military force is no longer to be taken for granted. The military professional tends to think of himself as a hard, cold realist who understands the threat and knows what the nation should do to deal with it; he frequently fails, however, to consider the changing perceptions of the domestic and international scene by the body politic.

#### THE UTILITY OF MILITARY FORCE

**I**f one accepts the proposition stated earlier that military force is legitimate only if it serves as an instrument of a legitimate foreign policy, a logical question must be: What is the utility of military force in the contemporary and projected international environment? Although the American armed forces are concerned with war and, if so ordered, must be ready to fight, their most important function now and in the foreseeable future is to make war less likely. The armed forces contribute to making war less likely in five distinct ways. The following discussion of those five ways borrows heavily from the study done at the Army War College that was cited earlier.<sup>7</sup>

The first way is deterrence. It has been the foundation of American national security policy for the past twenty-seven years; it was

an essential element of the containment policy, and is equally important in contemporary national security thinking; it is the least questioned—the most legitimate. There is every reason to believe that it will remain an essential part of our defense thinking for the foreseeable future.

Historically, modern western military thought has been based on the assumption that military forces existed for the express purpose of fighting the next war, which was certain to come. The concept of deterrence was not a part of military thought, and the notion of maintaining expensive forces to achieve a standoff—even before their use—would have been considered ludicrous. But the new idea that a military professional is successful, even if he never has to fight a war, is a fact of life that the 20th century modern major general must accept. It is part of deterrence—of the contemporary balance of power.

Deterrent policy has been concerned largely with avoiding nuclear war; as a result, the popular conception of deterrence is almost one of nuclear force. In actual fact, the question is infinitely more complex than that. Deterrence must be an operative concept at all levels of force, and be applicable before, during, and after an armed conflict. The idea of preventing small local wars from spreading and growing into worldwide confrontations is an essential aspect of the concept of deterrence.

A reasonable deterrent posture, then, would appear to include the "capability," as well as the perceived "intention," to fight a conventional as well as a nuclear war; a limited, as well as a total war; and an unconventional, as well as an orthodox war—whatever those terms may mean. All of this capability exists to deter—to prevent any conflict from breaking out, if possible, but at least to keep local conflict truly local and to prevent nuclear Armageddon. The forces that make this deterrence credible must be operational so as to deter an adversary from expanding an incident, from intensifying an ongoing conflict, or from initiating an action of any description. Perceived mutual vulnerability at all conflict levels is an

important element of deterrence, and some argue that it is indeed the very cornerstone of our national security. Senator Edward Kennedy argued recently that this cornerstone is "the mutual vulnerability of Soviet and American societies, and that each superpower is now partly responsible for the security of the other."<sup>8</sup> How many modern major generals have even toyed with the concept that the utility of American military force may have to be explained to the Congress and the public as contributing to the security of the Soviet Union?

The second way in which military force has utility is to provide options. Varied forces provide a major increase in the number of options open to the United States in implementation of a deterrence strategy, in support of foreign policy, and in defense of the United States. Conventional forces make additional options available below the threshold of nuclear warfare. If the nation were to preoccupy itself with nuclear strategic forces, it would be in the position of having no options other than the strategy of massive retaliation which was discarded more than a decade ago.

The nation might adopt a deliberate policy of "no more Vietnams," but potential conflict situations may arise regardless of such declarations. In these circumstances, such a policy may embolden other nations to take greater risks and aggressive actions against their neighbors. Moreover, if a policy of no more Vietnams is construed to mean that an effective armed force is no longer required, the absence of conventional forces capable of responding to a conventional attack may actually reduce the risks a prospective enemy must weigh in deciding whether to undertake provocative military actions.

Some form of "flexible response" is therefore required; although the world has changed, the basic requirement to have a balanced force in existence has not. The basis for the concept of "flexible response," as it was developed in the early nineteen sixties, remains intellectually sound. As a result of the Vietnam experience, the concept has lost credibility with much of the American public. It has also lost credibility with many military

professionals because it has been confused with the operational concept of gradualism that was applied in Vietnam. By whatever new name it is presented, providing a range of military options to the decisionmaker will become increasingly important in the decade of uncertainty that many observers see ahead—it is a central element of the rationale for armed forces in the next decade.

Third, military forces play an important—although difficult to define—political and psychological role in international affairs. Specifically, military forces provide strong evidence, to friends and adversaries alike, of national commitment and determination. In an era of negotiations and of complex relations among the major states, the political and psychological significance of deployed forces is heightened. Military forces have played such a role in the past; American forces in Europe will continue to be convincing evidence to Western Europeans of the importance the United States attaches to a politically stable Europe, free of excessive Soviet pressure and untroubled by serious intra-European conflict. Similarly, deployment of forces to an area, or reinforcement of an already deployed force, indicates dramatically to the world the importance of that area to the United States.

Deployed forces are not the only evidence of national commitment. It is difficult, however, to identify an instrumentality of foreign policy that can perform this role as a substitute for military forces. And forward deployed forces can best provide the politically and psychologically significant elements of control in dealing with people, as well as the assurance of national resolve stemming from the apparent inextricability of deployed ground forces.

Fourth, since announcement of the Truman Doctrine after World War II, military advisory and assistance activities have played an important role in American foreign and military policies. These activities are clearly consistent with the partnership concept of the Nixon Doctrine, and seem destined to play an even greater role in the future. The military's partnership responsibilities during the remainder of this decade—assuming the

necessary Congressional support for these activities is forthcoming—will focus largely on improving the capabilities of indigenous forces in the developing areas. Since these nations have little genuine need for technologically advanced air or naval forces, the principal burden of military partnership will probably fall upon the Army.

The fifth reason is a hedge against uncertainty. The critical thrust of current US foreign policies is negotiations, and the desired outcome of these negotiations is improved relations with former adversaries and continued good relations with current allies. If it were certain that this policy thrust would continue as projected, it would be reasonably simple to design military forces that would contribute usefully to American objectives during each phase of the negotiations. Yet the most striking features of the envisaged international system are ambiguity and uncertainty. The 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the 1974 Greek-Turkish confrontation are current examples of the uncertainty and unpredictability inherent in international affairs. Given these characteristics of the international system, it is prudent to hedge against them. Military forces provide insurance against the unexpected; in particular, forces in being reduce the time required to make an appropriate response, whether the response is reinforcement of an existing force, deployment of forces to a threatened area, or a credible ultimatum presented to another power. In this sense, armed forces are the nation's fire department—they can help prevent fires from breaking out and fight them if they do occur.

I have listed five ways—deterrence, additional decision options, increased political and psychological importance, partnership activities, and a hedge against uncertainty—to which the utility of military force can be linked. Note that none of these five uses of military force involves combat operations, although proven combat readiness is an essential ingredient in each. And if, for whatever reason, war is not avoided, the armed forces must then be prepared to undertake combat operations and to bring them to a successful conclusion.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

**I** am asking a great deal of my modern major general. I expect him to understand the society that he serves, to be knowledgeable of the world in which he lives, and to have a firm grip on the very complex concept of the utility of military force within the context of the assumed domestic and international environment. At the same time, I expect him to be a true expert in the conduct of military operations, so that he has credibility in the deterrent role and the ability to “win”—to achieve the political objective—if force is eventually brought to bear.

In the 1930's, Harold Lasswell described the role of the military professional as “the management of violence.” That remains an extremely descriptive phrase, but I would argue that today it is much too narrow in scope.<sup>9</sup> About thirty years later, General Sir John Hackett described it as the “ordered application for force in the resolution of a social problem.”<sup>10</sup> Most would agree that Hackett's expression is more descriptive of the expanded role of the military professional. His description does not exclude the management of violence but suggests something much more than that. The best description, in my opinion, is that constructed by Amos Jordan when he was head of the Social Science Department at the US Military Academy. He described the role of the military professional as “the management and application of military resources in deterrent, peacekeeping, advisory and combat roles in the context of rapid technological, social, and political change.”<sup>11</sup> This is clearly the broadest and most inclusive description that best describes the wide variety of tasks the modern major general will probably be called upon to perform.

How does a nation go about getting or developing military professionals who can even approach the model that is evolving? The short answer is the military education system, including the professional military schools and complementary civil schooling. It is not my purpose here to deal with the educational system, except to comment that it is a very complex, comprehensive system that is even

now undergoing close examination by the Services, the Department of Defense, and the Congress to determine whether it is indeed producing the kind of military professional who will qualify as a 20th century modern major general.

In August and September 1972, the Army sent twelve colonels selected for promotion to brigadier general to the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina. For two weeks the officers underwent an extensive evaluation exercise; at the conclusion, it was determined that they could be categorized rather clearly into three distinct managerial types.<sup>12</sup>

The first category was the "dependable, cautious, managerial type." The strengths of those in this category lie in their high-level capabilities, their dedication to mission accomplishment, and their dependability or predictability. The weaknesses lie in their lack of innovativeness, and lack of people-related concern and effectiveness. Half of the group fell into this category.

The second category was the "outgoing managerial type." The strengths here lie in the ability to get things done quickly and efficiently. The weaknesses lie in frequent failure to perceive in detail the possibilities inherent in various leadership situations. Three of the twelve fit this group.

The third category was the "potentially creative managerial type." These officers scored highest on measures of intelligence and creative ability, and performed best in unstructured roles and vague situations. The strengths lie in performance in situations where discovering the best way to proceed is a major part of the problem. Weaknesses lie in situations requiring moving ahead quickly along well-defined pathways without deviation. Three of the twelve fit this category.

This limited analysis is inadequate to describe accurately what a 1974 model modern major general might be like, but it does provide some interesting insights. Offhand, it would seem that category three best describes the 1980 vintage modern major general who will be needed to operate in the highly unpredictable domestic and

international environments hypothesized above. But only one-fourth of the group falls in that category. Is there something that should be done to ensure that the education, training, and experience of the modern major general will develop the necessary intellect to operate effectively in the 1980's?



The mythical Major General Stanley was a product of the Victorian era. Today's modern major generals are a product of the cold war era, and a very large percentage of them are, more specifically, products of the most tragic part of the cold war era—Vietnam. Their experience is narrow and their understanding of the society they serve, and the world in which they live, is in many cases limited and heavily colored by the Vietnam experience. One can hope that,

because there is an operative educational system, they will be capable of performing those tasks they will be called upon to perform. In the simplest terms, they are to see to the security of the United States in an era where the major threat is the unpredictability of the international system. The demands on the military professional today are greater than they have ever been in our history and there is no sign that these demands will lessen in the future.

With apologies to Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan, I shall risk a few lines that describe, at least in small part, my 20th century modern major general—vintage 1980.

When I comprehend my role in a world  
of rapid change,  
And think of my profession in its  
very broadest range;  
When deterrence I understand, and all  
that it implies,  
And on the meaning of detente I am  
among the wise;  
When the nation that I serve is  
better known to me,  
And the world in which I live is  
less a mystery;

When "utility of force" is a concept  
 I can grasp,  
 And multi-polar politics no longer  
 make me gasp;  
 When the rhetoric of hawks and doves I've  
 really found the clues to,  
 And puzzled out the meaning of the loons  
 and cockatoos;  
 In short, I'll be the very model of a  
 creature incredible,  
 That widely-trained professional, the  
 modern Major General.

#### NOTES

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4. "Tell the Truth," *Evening Sentinel*, (Carlisle, PA), 11 Sep 1974, p. 5.
5. US Army War College, *Army Tasks for the Seventies*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1972), pp. 35-51.
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8. Edward M. Kennedy, "Beyond Detente," *Foreign Policy*, (Fall 1974), 4.
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11. Amos A. Jordan, "Officer Education," in *The Handbook of Military Institutions*, ed. Roger W. Little (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1971), pp. 211-45.
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